

Metz's magic march on

PARIS, Oct 15: Unfashionable Metz kept up their surprise run in the French league on Saturday, beating Bordeaux 2-0 to stay on top and remain unbeaten in all 13 games this season, reports Reuter.

A goal in each half from midfielder Jocelyn Blanchard, the second a spectacular effort, kept Metz three points clear of Lens, who had beaten Martigues 1-0 on Friday.

Blanchard scored his first goal after only 14 minutes with a blistering shot after a pass from little Brazilian playmaker Isaias.

But it was nothing compared with his second in the 59th minute when he received a corner and blasted it home on the half volley from more than 35 metres out.

Paris St Germain suffered a setback when they were held to a goalless draw in Lyon even though home keeper Pascal Olmeta was sent off in the first half for a professional foul.

The Parisians slipped to fourth, six points adrift of Metz, as Auxerre leapfrogged over them with a 2-1 home win over Nice.

Champions Nantes, who play Dannes Aalborg in the European Cup on Wednesday, returned to form with a 2-0 win at bottom club Cannes in an ill-tempered match.

Bastia finished the game with nine men after two of their players received their marching orders in the second half.

Wheaton bites dust

TEL AVIV, Oct 15: Unheralded Slovak Jan Kroslak produced his best tour performance to reach the final of the 275,000 dollars Israel Open tennis tournament on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Kroslak pulled off a 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 semifinal victory over fourth-seeded David Wheaton of the United States.

The Slovak had previously won only once in 17 attempts in ATP Tour events, and by reaching today's final the world number 129 will enter the top 100.

Kroslak's opponent in the final is third-seeded Spaniard Javier Sanchez, who ousted seventh seed Stefano Pescosolido of Italy 6-2, 6-7.

Eriksson leads HK-Beijing rally

The first day of the Hong Kong-Beijing Rally has been successfully completed and, as expected, the event is already developing into a fierce battle between the two major teams, 555 Subaru World Rally Team and Mitsubishi, says a press release.

With just two tests taking place Friday, the advantage is held by the Mitsubishi which started quickly while the Subaru drivers have been taking a more cautious approach. Heavy rain earlier in the day meant there was a lot of water lying on the longer, second special stage and all the leading drivers complained that the surface was very slippery for the powerful rally cars.

With 23.90 km of stages completed, from a full competitive distance of 503 km, the rally is being headed by Kenneth Eriksson driving a Mitsubishi Lancer ARI Vatanen, in a similar car, is sec-

ond Eriksson has an 10 second lead over his teammate with the two Subarus of Burns and Bourne in third and fourth places overall.

Earlier in the day a large crowd, buzzing with excitement and enjoying traditional displays of Lion dancing, saw Possum Bourne in the Subaru Impreza 555, lead the 44 starters away from Hong Kong for this seven day, 3,700 km event.

The action started immediately with a short, 2.1 km stage on the navy land at Stonecutters Island where both Bourne and Burns set the pace, with joint fastest time. Burns had a slight scare when he clipped a kerb hard but the tyre stayed inflated and the support crew at the end of the stage reported no damage.

After crossing into China, the drivers faced a tougher test with 21.80 km on the wet gravel stage, Nam Kwan Mountain, where sheer drops and rock faces made driving difficult. The Mitsubishi, having chosen more suitable tyres than the Subarus, struck back. Eriksson was fastest, five seconds ahead of his teammate, Vatanen.

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